700 g 26 13.

Two Compendious

DISCOURSES:

The one concerning the

Power of God:

The other about the

CERTAINTY and EVIDENCE

OF A

Future State.

By Tho. Smith. *D. D.*

Publiſhed in Oppoſition to the growing Atheiſm and Deiſm of the Age.

LONDON:

Printed for, and are to be Sold by *Sam. Keble* at the *Turks-Head* in *Fleetſtreet.* 1708.

Lately publiſhed

THE Caſe of the Admiſſion of Occaſional Conformiſts to holy Communion, before they renounce their Schiſm, conſider'd; by way of Appeal to the Catholick Church of the Primitive Ages, and to the Church of *England*, as by Law eſtabliſh'd ſince the Reformation: Offer'd with all due Reſpect to the Reverend Clergy.

London, Printed for *Samuel Keble* at the *Turks-head* in *Fleetſtreet*, 1708.

43
4 6
760

To the Honourable,

Samuel Pepys Esquire.

SIR,

PResuming upon your leave and favour, I take the liberty of inscribing your name before two short discourses, written several years since, which I now publish with very little alteration. In the time of a great fire no one is to be an idle stander by or looker on: but he is to contribute, as much as in him lyes, to the extinguishing of the raging and devouring flames: tho' it be onely by handing a bucket of water toward the next engine, which others are laboriously managing with art and skill. This seems to be our present case. Dissoluteness of manners, like a pestilential vapour, having diffused its venimous influence farre and wide, and Atheisme and Deisme growing rampant, and all Religion, whether natural or revealed and instituted, being run down and ridiculed by several, who set up for Wits and Virtuosos, and pretend to greater measures of reason and understanding, than their dull forefathers ever had, who, it seems, prepossessed and prejudiced by a simple education, could not attain to those new discoveries, which they have made: a due concerne for the honour of God and of religion, which is founded upon eternal and essential rules of righteousness and wisdom, will justifie any mans discreet and sober zeal, in opposing the growth of such outragious and impudent blasphemy and infidelity.

This I alledge in defenſe of my little attempt: tho' it may be, it will be lookt upon to be almoſt as vaine, as if I ſhould go about to ſtop the violent current of water at London-bridge, when it comes ſwelling and flowing in with full wind and tide, with my naked hand: all other methods and remedies at preſent in this wicked and licentious age being ineffectual, I muſt not ſay, without a temporary Inquiſition, but I will ſay, without a ſtrict and rigorous execution of the laws, made by our wiſe and godly Anceſtors: which would make theſe bold men, if not more ſober, honeſt, and virtuous, at leaſt more modeſt, reſerved, and decent in their behaviour and conduct. Having thus made out the ſincerity of my intention and deſign in publiſhing theſe Papers, I am the leſs ſollicitous, whether I have with equal care and judgment performed the part of a Scholar, as well as of a Church-man: of which ſuch excellently learned and thoroughly accompliſhed Gentlemen, as your ſelf, are the moſt able and proper Judges. But however, whilſt I am endeavouring in my mean way to ſerve and promote the common cauſe and intereſt of religion and virtue, I readily take advantage of this addreſs; which I preſent, as a memorial of the great reſpect, eſteem, and honour, I have for you, upon the accompt of your public ſervices and merit, and alſo of the many great obligations, flowing from an entire friendſhip, which you have been pleaſed for ſeveral years to lay upon

SIR,

Your moſt faithfull

and moſt humble Servant

Tho Smith.

A DISCOURSE Concerning the Power of God.

ALL error proceeds from an undue apprehenſion of things; which is cauſed, either by weakneſs and ſhallowneſs of judgment, when there is a defect and inability in the underſtanding to ſearch to the bottom of things, to examine with a juſt and wiſe ſeverity whatever is propoſed, before it be admitted, and to weigh all circumſtances in an even ballance; that is, according to ſober, fix'd, and ſure principles, bottomed upon reaſon, good ſenſe, and unqueſtionable experience, and agreeable to the faculties of the mind, and the notions imprinted upon it: or elſe,

Which makes the error more dangerous and faulty, by an inconſiderate aſſent, and an over-haſty partiality, when the affections hinder the calm and deliberate debates of ſober reaſon, and caſting a miſt before the underſtanding, altogether blind it: ſo that it ſhall not be able to diſcern truth from falſhood, right from wrong, opi-

nion, and plauſibility, and conjecture, from certainty, and knowledge, and demonſtration. But where the idea's of things, capable of being fully known and proved, are diſtinct and proper, where the underſtanding is ſound and clear, and where the operations of the mind are free, and undiſturbed, either by irregular paſſion, or by fooliſh or irrational prejudice, truth is readily diſcerned and entertained, and makes its way into the mind, with the ſame eaſineſs and quickneſs, as the ſtreams of light flow upon the eye, which is open, and not otherwiſe indiſpoſed to receive them: by the help of which it may ſee all thoſe glorious and aſtoniſhing objects, that from every part of the viſible creation preſent themſelves.

For want of this rightful method and juſt principle in examining the truth of things, many are very apt and very willing to cheat themſelves, and out of a lazy kind of ignorance, and a fooliſh belief, that all things are, and muſt be, as they phanſie, take up idle and falſe opinions, and that not only concerning things of nature, (of which be our perceptions true or falſe, it matters not much in things purely ſpeculative, if they have no influence upon life, manners, or government; and a latitude of opinion is juſtly allowable in ſuch things alſo, as are not capable of a clear and ſatisfactory deciſion, either by ſenſe, experiment, or demonſtration) but alſo concerning religion: opinions, which contradict its holy deſigns, and directions, and commands: ſuch too, as are derogatory to the nature and attributes of God; ſuch, as are altogether diſhonourable and unworthy of him, and inconſiſtent with his divine perfections.

That God is a being abſolutely perfect, and conſequently of infinite power, nature and right reaſon, even abſtracted from revelation, ſuggeſt to every conſidering man to admit and aſſent unto: and no one, who hath any juſt or true notion of God, can poſſibly deny it, without

without great violence done to his faculties: and yet when any difficulty preſents it ſelf, which we cannot maſter, and when we are puzled and diſſatisfied in our ſearch of things, we preſently fly off, and whatever is above the reach of our nature, or above the comprehenſion of our knowledge, or above our contrivance, or above our power, muſt be denied to be poſſible even to God himſelf, becauſe we cannot conceive it, or rather will not conceive it aright: thus bringing all things down to our narrow and ſcanty model, and levelling, not onely the higheſt myſteries of revealed religion, but the eſſential perfections of the Godhead, knowable by the light of nature, and the principles of natural religion, that there are ſuch, and neceſſarily muſt be ſo, with our low, dull, and earthy phanſies.

To obviate theſe miſtakes therefore, which may ariſe from a miſapprehenſion of this divine Attribute, I ſhall endeavour to ſettle the true notion of it: upon the clearing up of which, all thoſe doubts and ſcruples, and objections, which ſome bold and preſumptuous men, as void for the moſt part of all honeſt and ſober morals, as they are of ſound learning and philoſophy, being equally debauched and corrupted in their underſtanding, and in their behaviour and practiſe, are wont as it were triumphantly to propoſe even in places of publick reſort, as well as in their ordinary converſation, in this Sceptical and Atheiſtical age, againſt a creation, againſt the miracles recorded in the holy Scriptures, againſt the doctrine of the ever bleſſed and adorable Trinity, and of the incarnation of the Son of God, and laſtly againſt the belief of a reſurrection, and the like, will vaniſh and diſappear; and all thoſe truths, whether natural or revealed, which they with equal raſhneſs and impiety have pronounced impoſſible, will be found juſt objects, as to the former, of our knowledge and underſtanding, and

as to the latter, of faith and of a wiſe and rational aſſent.

In order hereento I will ſhew theſe three things:

I. What is the true and proper notion of the divine power; and in what reſpect it is ſaid, that nothing is impoſſible to God: that

II. The attribute of infinite power is neceſſarily included in the notion and idea of God: and that

III. It is altogether unreaſonable to limit the power of God in things poſſible, or deny any doctrine of religion, whether revealed in Scripture, or flowing from the principles of natural reaſon, becauſe it tranſcends either our power or our underſtanding.

I. What concerns the firſt particular, *viz.* what is the true and proper notion of the divine power, and in what reſpect it is affirmed both by the voice of nature and Scripture, that nothing is impoſſible to God, may be comprized in theſe two following propoſitions.

1. The firſt propoſition is, that God can readily and eaſily effect and do whatever is abſolutely poſſible to be done.

The world, it is certain, from the beginning has been ſubject to the laws of Providence, and all things run the courſe, which was at firſt ſet them, and are directed and carried on to the ſeveral ends of their creation by an unerring hand: and notwithſtanding their ſeveral tendencies, all concur to accompliſh the great deſign of God, and that without prejudice to their reſpective natures. Thus the celeſtial orbs and vortices have their fixt periods and revolutions: the ſun, and moon, and ſtars are regular in their motion, and take their rounds day and night about the earth: and the great ocean in its ebbs and flows follows the laws of motion and ſta-

tick

tick principles. And ſo for all other natural Agents: they have their limits ſet them, which they cannot paſs: they only do what is agreeable to their nature; and they can do no more: the powers, whereby they act, being neceſſary, but withal confined. Yet though this order and courſe of things be fixt and ſettled, and ſeldom interrupted by God, unleſs to alarm the world, and for ſome great end, and to ſhew, that nature depends upon him, and that all things ſubſiſt by his power, which is onely able to preſerve what it firſt made: yet there is no repugnance, that things might have been made otherwiſe, than they are, if it had pleaſed him. We cannot but acknowledge ſeveral poſſibilities of things, lying in their cauſes, which we, by reaſon of our weakneſs, cannot draw forth into effect: for want of ſuch and ſuch combinations, and by reaſon of ſeveral impediments and accidents, which it is not in our power to remove, or through ſome indiſpoſition in the matter to be wrought upon, it happens, that thoſe poſſibilities are not clothed with actual exiſtence: there being no repugnancy in the nature of the thing it ſelf, and the defect wholly ariſing from ſome other cauſe. Whatſoever effects there are then of the divine power now exiſting, more may be produced: new ſpecies of things may be added, and new worlds made, whatever becomes of the hypotheſis of the habitableneſs of the planets, and of the opinion, that every fixed Star is a Sun, at an almoſt immenſe diſtance from the earth, and from one another: and thoſe things, which are, might have been endowed with different powers, activities, qualities, impreſſions, motions, and operations; and matter made capable of other far different modifications, and determinations of particular motions, from which might have been derived inconceivably great variety of other natural productions.

And here it may be neceſſary to interpoſe, that God does no more, than what he firſt wills: his power is directed by his wiſdom and divine pleaſure, which is the rule and meaſure of it: which conſideration ſhould juſtly ſatisfie us about the late creation of this viſible world, in which we breath. To call in queſtion therefore the accompts given of it by Moſes, who fixes its beginning not many thouſand years ago, as our modern Atheiſts and Deiſts do, and to object idle, fooliſh, unlearned, and groundleſs phanſies againſt thoſe authentick Regiſters, acknowledged in all ages ſince his time, and which the more grave and judicious ſort of Heathen Writers have revered, and from whence they have borrowed ſeveral of their tenents both of philoſophy and religion, though oftentimes artificially diſguiſed, or corrupted with their fabulous additions, is altogether irrational. For let theſe men of high-flown wit and phanſie deny, if they can or dare, and at the ſame time pretend to reaſon like Philoſophers and Scholars, whether this is not to preſcribe to the almighty and alwiſe God, what he ſhould have done, and with equal impudence and impiety limit his will. For ſuppoſe, for arguments ſake, that the world had been created forty or fifty thouſand years before, or if they will, ſo many myriads and millions of years, and that the chronology of the Chineſes, Chaldeans, and Egyptians, which latter is preſerved out of the writings of Manetho, a Prieſt of that country, who lived in the time of Prolemæus Philadelphus, by Julius Africanus, and out of him by Euſebius and Georgius Syncellus, were not fabulous, and proceeded not from a vain affectation of Antiquity, but had ſome ground in nature and hiſtory: yet conſidering the eternal power of the Godhead, the ſame queſtion might as well be put, (and it may be put thouſands of years hence, if the preſent conſtitution of the world ſhould continue ſo long undiſſolved) why

why was it not produced ſooner: this mighty ſpace, as it ſeems to us, poor, frail, and mortal creatures, who are permitted by the great God, who made us, to live here upon earth three or fourſcore years at furtheſt, being comparatively inconſiderable, and holding no proportion to a duration, which had no beginning. Thus, at laſt, theſe conceitedly inquiſitive men loſe themſelves in the rambling and unbounded flights of their phanſie, or elſe run themſelves upon this groſs abſurdity, that dull and unactive matter is eternal, and take upon them to direct an alwiſe and infinite being, when, and what worlds he ſhould make: not conſidering, that the mind of God is unſearchable, and paſt the comprehenſion of finite underſtanding, and that no reaſon ought to be demanded of his divine will and pleaſure, and of his actions *ad extra*, as the School-phraſe is.

For want of this conſideration alſo, others there are, and the Platoniſts eſpecially, who under a pretenſe of advancing the divine goodneſs, do really, and in effect, deſtroy it; whilſt they make the emanations of it phyſical and neceſſary, which are moſt arbitrary and free, and the pure reſults of his will.

The powers of moral Agents are at their own diſpoſal, to uſe when and how they pleaſe: and by this they are diſcriminated from natural; who act according to their utmoſt ſtrength and vigour, unleſs their activity be hindred by a miracle, and from brutes, birds, and other animals, who are devoy'd of reaſon, and follow their innate inſtincts, motions, and appetites. Where there is a principle of knowledge and liberty in the mind to guide and direct it, as in men, who have thereby a power over themſelves and their actions, it is far otherwiſe: and it is not neceſſary, that they do all which they can do. Nor is this power therefore to be accounted idle, and to no purpoſe: becauſe they can make uſe of it, whenſo-

ever

ever it ſhall make for their intereſt and advantage, or whenſoever their reaſon, or even their phanſie, ſhall judge it fit and proper to reduce it into act. Much more is this to be allowed to God, whoſe other attributes are as infinite, as his power: Pſalm cxv. 3. *Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed.* Pſalm cxxxv. 6. (a) *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the ſeas, and in all deep places.* And if his wiſdom had thought fit, and if he had once willed the ſame, inſtead of creating one world, he might have created a thouſand.

(a) Theodoretus in loc. Οὐ τῇ δυνάμει συμμέτρα τὰ γενόμενα, ἀλλὰ τῇ βουλήσει ὑπέδυναστο μὴν γὰρ καὶ πολλαπλάσια τούτων καὶ πολλῷ μείζονα δημιουργῆσαι, ἀλλὰ τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἠθέλησε. *The things, which now exiſt, are not fully proportionable to the divine power, ſo as to exhauſt it, but onely agreable to his divine will and pleaſure. For God could have created more and greater things than theſe: but he would only make ſo many, and of ſuch ſorts, ſpecies, and denominations, as it pleaſed him.*

However, the object of the divine power in its fulleſt latitude and comprehenſion, abſtractedly conſidered, is, whatſoever is abſolutely and ſimply poſſible. By which terms we are to exclude (*b*)

(a) The Greeke and Latine Fathers are very copious and careful, even to a philoſophical niceneſs, in their explications and illuſtrations of theſe common notions about the juſt and proper object of the divine power: a collection of which the Reader may find in Biſhop Pearſon's elaborate and learned Commentary on the Apoſtles Creed, where he treats of this particular argument, as of the reſt of the Articles, with great accuracy and judgment. More authorities might eaſily be added by one of ordinary reading: but I forbear at preſent; it being a common place: and ſhall content my ſelf onely to adjoyn the concurrent teſtimonies of the Maſter of the Sentences, and Thomas Aquinas. Petrus Lombardus lib. 1. Sententiarum xlii. diſtinct.

Sunt alia quædam, quæ Deus nullatenus facere poteſt, ut peccata: non enim poteſt mentiri, non poteſt peccare. Sed non ideo omnipotentiæ Dei detrahitur vel derogatur, ſi peccare non poſſe dicitur: quia non eſſet hoc potentiæ, ſed infirmitatis. Si enim hoc poſſet, omnipotens non eſſet. Non ergo impotentiæ ſed poteatiæ imputandum eſt, quod iſta non poteſt. Again, *Manifeſtum eſt, Deum omnino nihil poſſe pati, & omnia facere poſſe, præter ea ſola, quibus ejus dignitas læderetur, ejuſque excellentiæ derogaretur: in quo tamen non eſt minus omnipotens. Hoc enim poſſe non eſſet poſſe, ſed non poſſe* ——— Herein following the doctrine of his Maſter S. Auguſtine, in his book de Symbolo, which he there cites: *Deus omnipotens non poteſt mori, non poteſt falli, non poteſt miſer fieri, nec poteſt vinci. Hæc utique & hujuſmodi abſit, ut poſſet omnipotens. Si enim hujuſmodi paſſionibus atque defectibus ſubjici poſſet, omnipotens minimè foret:* and in his book de ſpiritu & literâ: *Non poteſt Deus facere injuſta, quia ipſe eſt ſumma juſtitia & bonitas.* Thomas Aquinas in Summa Theologica part 1. quæſt. xxv. Artic. 3. *Ea quæ contradictionem implicant, ſub divinâ omnipotentiâ non continentur: quia non poſſunt habere poſſibilium rationem. Unde convenientius dicitur, quod ea non poſſunt fieri, quam*

quod

quod Deus ea non possit facere. Post. *Peccare est deficere à perfecta ratione: unde posse peccare est posse deficere in agendo; quod repugnat omnipotentiæ. Et propter hoc Deus peccare non potest, quia est omnipotens.* The whole of what has been said both by Fathers and Schoolmen upon this subject, is summed up by the learned Dr. *Overall*, (then Dean of St. Pauls, and afterwards Bishop of Norwich) in a letter to his Friend, H. Grotius, written 16 May 1613. in this brief definition and sentence: *Potentia [Dei] activa, qua omnia possibilia, quæ non implicant contradictionem, impotentiam, iniquitatem, aliudque quid Deo indignum facere possit.*

1. Whatever is contrary to the nature and essential perfections of the Godhead. *Thus it is impossible for God to lye:* ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι Θεὸν, Ebr. vi. 18. to which passage, as to many others in that Epistle, * S. Clement alludes: ἔδει ἀδύνατον παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ, εἰ μὴ τὸ ψεύσασθαι: because he is a God of infinite veracity. *God cannot deny himself:* ἀρνήσασθαι ἑαυτὸν δ δύναται 2 Tim. ii. 13. God cannot but make good his word, whether we will believe, or no: if we are resolved to be Infidels and Scepticks in the midst of so much conviction, which Christianity affords concerning the truth of its mysteries and doctrine, and the truth of its promises: if we throw in our scruples and doubts, and distrust his word, we shall one day be convinced and ashamed of such irrational infidelity: his word shall infallibly be effected; veracity being as essential to God, as necessary existence: and if God cannot but be, he cannot be otherwise, than just and true. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.* And for the same reason we remove from God whatsoever savours of imperfection, as being repugnant to the idea, which we have of him, who is a being infinitely and absolutely perfect. And in strictness of speech, if such things could be done, he would not be omnipotent; because they are arguments and demonstrations of weakness. For what is a lye, but a plain confession of guilt, and of fear, that we dare not tell and own the truth, when we are demanded it? Unfaithfulness is a breach of that moral honesty and integrity, which humane nature and the civil laws and rules of government require between man

* In Epistola ad Romanos: edit. Oxon. 1633. 4°. pag. 36.

and man. God is alſufficient, and therefore cannot ſtand in need of the aſſiſtence of his creatures: whereas we want, becauſe we have not an abſolute and full power and command over things, and cannot diſpoſe of them, as and when we will, to ſupply our ſelves. Our being deceived proceeds from our ignorance: but God cannot be deceived, becauſe he is omniſcient, and knows the ſecret thoughts and intentions of the heart, and *all things are naked and open before him:* there being an utter impoſſibility of error in the divine underſtanding. Our ſickneſs flows from ilneſs of temper, natural decays of animal and vital ſpirits, and tainted and vitiated bloud and other humors; and death is the puniſhment of ſin, and the effect and conſequence of a frail and brittle conſtitution: the curious machine of the body, being quite worn out by age, at laſt falling into pieces, tho' otherwiſe never ſo carefully preſerved from the diſorders of intemperance, or the miſchiefs of chance, or the aſſaults of violence. All which imperfections the very notion of a God does wholly exclude and remove.

2. By this we are to exclude whatever implies a contradiction or a repugnancy in its nature; as that the ſame thing ſhould be and not be at the ſame time, and in the ſame manner and reſpect: and that things, which have been, ſhould now be made not to have been. Things might not have been, before they were: but when once they have been, they cannot but be: which onely is a neceſſity by way of ſuppoſition. Whatever then is repugnant to the nature and eſſence of a thing is therefore impoſſible, becauſe otherwiſe the thing would be the ſame, and not the ſame: the eſſence would remain entire, and yet be deſtroyed at the ſame time: which is a clear and manifeſt contradiction. Power therefore, in the eſſential notion of it, is no way extenſible either to the doing or reconciling real and perfect contradictions: becauſe the

oppoſite

oppoſite terms deſtroy each other, and conſequently there is an utter impoſſibility of their ſubſiſting together: and if we examine the contradiction thoroughly, we ſhall find, that there is always in one of the terms a plain and manifeſt denial of being. Thus to imagine, that the humane nature of our B. Saviour, by reaſon of its union with the word, ſhould become in a manner immenſe, and fill all places, becauſe the Godhead does; what is it, but to confound eſſential properties of things, which are altogether irreconcileable? or to aſſert, that a body, continuing one and the ſame, ſhould yet be multiplied into ſeveral entire wholes: that the entire body of Chriſt ſhould be in the leaſt crum of a wafer, and the ſeveral parts of it be diſtinct, and retain the ſame figure and order, and be extended at their full length, as they lye unconfuſed as it were in an indiviſible point: be in heaven and upon earth at the ſame time: be upon a thouſand altars together in the moſt diſtant parts of the world, without any diſcontinuity, and be brought thither by the pronunciation of five words, not to urge the ugly and horrid conſequences, which flow from the admittance of ſuch a groſly abſurd opinion; what is it, but to impoſe, under the pretenſe of an infallible authority, upon the faith, underſtanding, and reaſon of all mankind, and peremptorily lay down contradictory and ſelf-deſtroying notions, as neceſſary terms and conditions of Catholick communion? If in things, which are plainly and confeſſedly poſſible in themſelves, we are not to engage the infinite power of God without a juſt cauſe, nor to think God almighty obliged to make good our groundleſs and extravagant phanſies: much leſs are we to deſtroy the nature of things; and ſwallow down and maintain real and manifeſt contradictions, and make that, which would be one of the greateſt wonders of the world, ſuppoſing, that it were poſſible, to be done ordinarily, and every where, and every day, a

thouſand times, without any other proof, than our bare phanſying ſo: as they do, who maintain the doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation in all the School-niceties of it, againſt Scripture and reaſon, againſt the principles of nature and philoſophy, againſt the atteſtation of ſenſe, and the judgment of antiquity, and againſt the experience of all mankind: and do all this, rather than admit of a figurative expreſſion in the words of the Inſtitution.

In favour of this monſtrous tenent, the Romaniſts object to us the incomprehenſibility of the myſteries of faith; and hence think, that they may elude all thoſe unanſwerable difficulties, which this new doctrine is charged with, and that there is argument enough to ſatisfie their doubts in that miſapplyed ſaying, the effect, it may be, of rapture and indiſcreet devotion, *Ideo credo, quia eſt impoſſibile.* But the great diſparity, which is between them, is eaſily obvious to any one, who will give himſelf leave to conſider things calmly and fairly, and not ſuffer himſelf to be impoſed upon by a pretenſe of an authority, abſolutely to be obeyed and ſubmitted to, as well in doctrine, as in matters and decrees of diſcipline, without the leaſt ſcruple and heſitation. As,

1. That there is the higheſt reaſon in the world to believe the myſteries of faith, tho' they tranſcend our utmoſt capacity; becauſe they are expreſly and clearly revealed in the writings of the new Teſtament. It is the greateſt ſecurity of our faith imaginable, that God has ſaid it; and therefore let the thing revealed ſeem never ſo unlikely and harſh to my underſtanding, I have as much reaſon to believe it, as any thing, which happens ordinarily every day, and preſents it ſelf to my ſenſes; nay more: for there is a poſſibility, that a particular perſon may be deceived ſometimes, not to ſay all mankind, even in a matter of ſenſe: but there is an utter impoſſibility, that God ſhould be deceived in any propoſition he has

thought

thought fit to reveal. But this they will not pretend to say for their Transubstantiation, that there is the same evidence of Scripture for it, or indeed, that they have any evidence at all, as many of their own party have confessed; and for want of which they have recourse to the authority of the Church. Besides, their greatest stress for the proof of it wholly lyes upon a gross and unnatural sense of words, which are capable of a far easier and more agreeable interpretation, especially when the other words, used by our B.Saviour in the blessing and consecration of the wine, are most certainly and undeniably figurative.

2. These articles are essential to the Christian faith: the doctrine of it cannot be entire without them: and besides, they were explicitely believed and assented to, as to the matter of them, from the first ages of Christanity, tho' there were some disputes raised about the terms, by which they were expressed, and a latitude used in the explication of them: and the disbelief or denial of them was justly branded with the odious name of heresie in general Councils: and the dissenters anathematized and thrust out of the communion of the Church, and the true doctrine of the Christian religion, as delivered by Christ and his Apostles, secured and established against the corruptions and innovations in after-times by publick Creeds universally received. Whereas this is a meer novel doctrine, first brought into the Church the better to establish the gross errors and superstitions relating both to the opinions and practises of Image-worship, and advancing by degrees in times of horrible ignorance and corruption of manners, till it came first to be decreed and established an article of faith by the Assessors of the Lateran Council: besides, it does no way serve or promote the interests of Christianity, but does very much prejudice

it,

it, and expoſe it, I am ſure, to the contempt of the enemies of it, both Turks and Jews, who chooſe rather to continue in their infidelity, than ſubmit to it upon their firſt disbelieving their very ſenſes.

3. There is a vaſt difference between them in reſpect of their ſubject-matter. Things relating to God are above the level of our underſtanding; moſt of our little knowledge being derived from ſenſe, which cannot reach thoſe objects, that are altogether abſtracted from it: whereas this falls under the examination of our ſenſes and reaſon: they are things we every day converſe with: things we may ſafely pretend to judge of, as being every way proportionable to our faculties.

4. Theſe articles of faith involve in them no true and real contradiction, as the doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation does. The Chriſtian religion propoſes nothing to our belief, but what is poſſible, and therefore credible; as has been proved by ſeveral learned men of our Church againſt the heterodoxies and blaſphemies of the Socinians: nothing, which contradicts or thwarts the common and eſtabliſhed notions of nature: I ſay, the doctrine of it, as it is contained in the Scripture, and according to the ancient tradition of the Catholick Church, and the explications of the firſt œcumenical Councils: to both which, tradition and authority, next to the ſacred Scripture, which is the rule of faith, we ought to have regard even in controverſies of faith; and not as it is perplext and entangled by the bold niceties of the School-men, who have corrupted the truth and ſimplicity of the Chriſtian religion by the mixtures of the philoſophy of Plato and Ariſtotle. So that we do not limit the divine power, or deny it to be infinite, as the bigotted Romaniſts pretend, becauſe we reject this figment of Tranſubſtantiation, as a falſe, abſurd, and contradictory doctrine, (beſides the other above-mentioned exceptions, which no ſophiſtry or cavil can honeſtly and truly put by,

or

or juſtly ſatisfie) which they ought to prove to be in the number of things poſſible. All which we believe from the nature of this attribute, as we are obliged, that God can do.

2. The ſecond propoſition is this, that nothing can hinder the effects of God's power, if once he has willed and determined the ſame *. And of this truth, both of nature and religion, the very Heathen had a fixt belief and apprehenſion, *viz.* that all oppoſition made againſt God was vain and ineffectual: and that though ſome, according to the fictions of their Poets, were ſo fooliſh, as well as impious, to make a war upon the Gods, and attempted to pluck Jupiter out of his throne; yet they always came by the worſt, and were caſt down from their hopes, and from thoſe mountains, which they had laid one upon another to ſcale heaven with, to feel the revenging effects of that power, which before they had ſo much ſlighted. Here below power may be either balanced and reſiſted with ſucceſs, or elſe it may be undermined or baffled by wit, and policy, and ſtratagems of war: and great armies have ſometimes been routed and vanquiſhed by inconſiderable numbers, and have met with ſhameful defeats and overthrows. But the divine power is irreſiſtible: there is no withſtanding it: the whole creation muſt needs tremble and ſink at the preſence of God: and this the proud Aſſyrian King was forced to confeſs, when he was recovered from his phrenſie: Dan. iv. 35. *That the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and that God doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can ſtay his hand, and ſay unto him, what doſt thou?* So that we ſee, that the credibility of this article is founded not onely upon Scripture and revelation, but upon nature and right reaſon: which I ſhall more fully prove, by making good

* Vid. S. Clementem Romanum pag. 36, 37.

II. The

II. The ſecond general head, that the attribute of infinite power is eſſentially involved in the notion and idea of God.

Power in it ſelf is an excellence and perfection: and things are more or leſs valued according to the greater or leſſer degrees, which they have of it. I do not mean that force and energy onely, ſuch as is found in inanimate beings, ariſing from the ſeveral diſpoſitions of matter, whereby they are apt to make thoſe great alterations, that are in the world: becauſe their operations are neceſſary, but withal limited to a few particular effects: nor ſuch a power, as is in brute creatures, ariſing from the ſtrength and quantity of animal ſpirits, from the temper of bloud, and from the make and conſtitution of their bodies: but ſuch a power, as is directed by reaſon, and is arbitrary and free, and may be uſed or not uſed, according as upon debate and deliberation ſhall be judged moſt convenient: ſuch a power, as extends it ſelf to various objects, and effectually brings to paſs, what is deſigned in the mind, and contrived in the brain: a power, whereby a man has a full command over things, and can ſubject them to his will and diſpoſal, and make uſe of, ſo as to advance himſelf, and get the maſtery over others, and make himſelf be dreaded every where. Yet however ſuch a one, who has attained a deſpotick power, whether rightfully by ſucceſſion, or by force of arms and cruelty, or by the arts, whether of lawful or wicked, policy, may pleaſe himſelf with the ſucceſs of his councils and ſtratagems and dextrous management of affairs, both in peace and war, and phanſie great matters of himſelf, and ſwell with the thoughts of his acquired greatneſs: he is not able to withſtand the leaſt ſickneſs: this can ſoon mortifie him, and bring him upon his knees, and make him ſenſible of his weakneſs, and the folly of his pride. When God does but arm the moſt deſpicable creatures againſt him, and gives

gives them a commiſſion to aſſault and invade him, the leaſt infliction baffles and routs his hopes and confidences, gives him a fair proſpect of himſelf and of his defects, and ſhews him, what a miſerable creature man is at the beſt, who cannot ſecure himſelf of health, of happineſs, of life for one moment. By this he is made to ſee and acknowledge, that there is ſomething above him, to whom he is accountable, that orders and diſpoſes of all things at his pleaſure: that all that power, which is diſtributed among ſo many creatures, in ſuch a ſtrange variety and ſubordination, is derived from ſome ſupreme being, in whom it is united, and infinitely much more: and if that he withdraw his influence, or blows upon any counſel, it comes to nothing, and the deſigns of theſe mighty men, who have got the empire of the world into their hands, are ſoon at an end together with their lives, and they faint away, and drop into their graves, and all their thoughts periſh; becauſe all the power they have is but the communication of his will, an emanation of his providence, and an imperfect ſhadow of that power, by which he governs the world: all ſecond cauſes being influenced by him, and acting onely by virtue of what they have received. For it is the plain and unconſtrained collection of reaſon, that nothing has of it ſelf a power to act, whereby it contributes to make up the harmony of the world: that their eſſences and the operations, flowing from them, are both limited, and are eaſily diſſolvible by that power, which firſt made them; and that they have a dependence upon a being, which is infinite, and almighty, and independent. What a blot and ſtain would it be to that fair idea of a God, to imagine, that any thing poſſible could be above his power, or too hard for his omnipotence? what were this but to cloath him with the infirmities of a man, to level him with his creatures, and to take off that eſſential and neceſſary diſtinction

between them? This power then must be infinite: for what can limit or restrain it? who can put a force upon him, or stop his procedures, when there is nothing equal and co-ordinate? can man, whose breath is in his nostrils, who a few years since had no being, and that which he has, he owes wholly to another, born an infant into the world, made to his hands: he, as soon as he comes to years, and can use his reason, and discern things, quickly perceives his weaknesses and wants, and cannot help himself. Can the united strength of other creatures? They act onely, as they are directed: all that they have is plainly borrowed, and at the disposal of him, who made them. They may be traced to their originals, and are perishable in their natures: it is the power of God, which, as at first gave, still continues to them their being.

Now to demand, why is there then no infinite effect of an infinite power? is to forget, that this implies a contradiction: infinity being an incommunicable attribute, and onely peculiar to God; and therefore the distance will ever remain infinite between the opposite terms of such a relation, as that of the Creator to the creature. But God has given sufficient displays of his power, and the effects of it are so various and innumerable, that they are convincing and demonstrative arguments of its being infinite, and that no power less than such could ever have produced them. *The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things, that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.* i Rom. 20. We judge of worldly productive power by vast piles of building: but what is a Pyramid, or an Aquæduct, or a Colossus, or an Amphitheater, to the orderly and glorious frame of things? how pitiful and mean in comparison of the heavens? Let us cast up our eyes thither, and there behold * the several orbs moving on in an uninterrupted order, the swiftness of their motion,

* Vide hac de re S. Clementem Romanum eleganter differentem, pag. 27, 28.

and

and withall the greatneſs of their bodies, that the earth, about which poor mortals contend ſo much, and to get a little part and ſhare of, which they cannot poſſeſs long, venture their quiet and their lives, and oftentimes their very ſouls, is but a point in reſpect of them: the vaſt diſtance between us and the heavens: the glorious and inexhauſtible brightneſs of the ſun and the ſtars, and the kind influences of them upon all things here below, and the like: and we cannot but be filled with the admiration of God, who made them. *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth his handy work.* Let us reflect upon the ſituation of the earth, how it is hung upon nothing in the middle of the heavens, having no foundation to reſt upon, but a magnetical vigour, imprinted by the hand of God, whereby the parts of it are ſo firmly united, all of them tending toward the center by an innate principle of gravity, that, if it were poſſible for it, according to the phanſy of Archimedes, to be moved out of its place by any engine, it would return ſpeedily to it again: the virtue and fruitfulneſs of it in producing thoſe various ſorts of plants, flowers, and trees, with thoſe ſeveral minerals and metals, and other foſſils, which lye hid in the bowels of it: the great variety of living creatures, which ſerve for the ornament and beauty of the creation: and above all, let us contemplate man: the curious make and frame of his body, and the uſes of each part: but chiefly the faculties of his mind, whereby he is able to govern himſelf and the other creatures ſubject to him, and even make uſe of thoſe things, which he cannot alter and change, and derive a benefit from them to himſelf.

Now the concluſions, naturally ariſing hence, are

1. That *the builder and maker of all is God:* becauſe this frame and conſtitution of the world is above all created ſtrength and power, and things could not make themſelves,

ſelves, but owe their being and original to his divine will, and to his infinite power and wiſdom: and

2. That he, who made the heavens, and the earth, and all things therein, who has hung up thoſe lights in the sky, which flame ſo brightly: who has imprinted ſuch a ſwift and unwearied motion in the ſtars: who has filled that vaſt diſtance of ſpace between us and them with ſo ſubtil and perſpicuous a body: who has caſt the earth into ſuch a figure, that every part of it might enjoy the influences of the heavens with the greater advantage, and as it were interchangeably and by turns: who has cauſed thoſe deep channels for the waters, upon which Ships may paſs from one extreme part of the world to the other, and keep up and maintain a commerce with all mankind; and the like: He can do much more: his power is not confined to any one effect: if he does but once will the ſame, preſently a new world ſhall ſtart up out of nothing. For what ſhall hinder? it being equally eaſie to an infinite and inexhauſtible power to make more, as one. Who queſtions an Artiſts power, who has brought ſome curious piece to perfection, whether a ſtatue, or a picture, or a watch, or a medal; but that ſuppoſing the ſame conveniences, he can make more according to the firſt model, and vary and alter it according to the ſeveral workings and movings of his phanſie? and if this be ſo eaſily conceivable, and withal ſo agreeable to reaſon, who can doubt of thoſe leſſer things, which have been brought to paſs in the ſeveral ages of the world: ſuch, as are the alterations of the courſe of nature for a time, as *the ſtanding ſtill of the ſun and moon*, (that diſorder in the heavens, which this interruption might cauſe, being ſoon after removed, and the former regular motion reſtored) the *dividing of the red ſea into two parts*: the waters of it riſing up and ſtanding on an heap, *the wonders of Ægypt*, and *all thoſe ſtupendious miracles, wrought by our bleſſed Saviour*

and

and his Apoſtles? for if we conſider things thoroughly, as great things are done every day: but the commonneſs of them takes away the wonder, and makes us ſlight and neglect them. Let us embrace either of the two Hypotheſes, it matters not. One would judge it more incredible, that ſo great a body, as the ſun, or earth, ſhould move at all, than that the motion of the one or other ſhould be interrupted and ſtopt for ſome hours, but that our ſenſes and the interchanges and viciſſitudes of day and night, and the ſeveral ſeaſons of the year, aſſure us of it: and it is as great, if not a greater, wonder, that the tides ſhould be ſo regular and periodical according to the courſe of the moon, and that this flux and reflux ſhould be made twice almoſt in five and twenty hours, than that the waters in a ſmall gulph, as is the Arabian, ſhould riſe and ſwell as it were into a mountain, and leave part of the channel dry and bare, and to be paſſed over on foot. They will ſay, that theſe admirable effects are according to *nature:* a word uſed by theſe men, who are afraid to own a Deity, to very ill purpoſes. But what do they mean by *nature?* Do they mean a principle of things, void of life and underſtanding? but can the ſtately, and curious, and regular frame of things flow from ſuch a principle? Can that, which has no ſenſe, or underſtanding, or life, or skill, be the author of ſuch beings, which are endowed with all? How comes it to confer that upon others, which it has not in it ſelf? If they ſay, that they mean by *nature* that order of things, which was fixt and eſtabliſhed by God, the ſupreme cauſe, in the beginning, by which the world is ordinarily governed: why then will they deny the God of nature to be able to alter it, when it ſhall make for his glory? A ſerious reflexion upon the ordinary works of nature will quickly ſilence all thoſe doubts and ſcruples, which have been raiſed by a company of ignorant, illiterate, and debauched

bauched Atheiſts and Deiſts againſt the belief of the miracles recorded in the Scriptures, and confirmed by unqueſtionable evidence of thouſands, who have ſeen them done, and were actually preſent at the doing of them, upon this fooliſh pretence, becauſe they ſeem to contradict the preſent ſtate of things, as if that could not be altered, changed, and exceeded: which is nothing leſs, than to limit and tye up as it were the hands of an almighty Agent. Thus nature and reaſon fully and unconſtrainedly give in their ſuffrages to the truth of this article: and certainly, tho' ſome ſhallow wits may acquieſce in ſecond cauſes, and think, that they have attained their end, if they can find out ſome of the nigheſt and moſt immediate, and relying very vainly and preſumptuouſly upon the ſuppoſed ſtrength of the Atomical or Mechanical philoſophy, go about with great impiety to exclude God from having any thing to do either in the making or governing the world: yet whoſoever, like a wiſe and true Philoſopher, and ſober rational man, will ſearch further into the originals of thoſe immediate and fundamental cauſes of things, and carefully obſerve, how they are linked and tyed together; in what excellent order; and to what wiſe ends and purpoſes; he will find himſelf under a neceſſity of having ſpeedy recourſe to the infinite wiſdom and power of God: and therefore, as that excellent perſon, the Lord Verulam, obſerves in his Eſſays; *God never wrought a miracle to convince Atheiſm: becauſe his ordinary works ſufficiently convince it.*

Now as it is altogether abſurd to proceed upon ſlight and narrow principles, taken up from the obſervation of the preſent and uſual ſtate of nature, to the prejudice of the truth of miracles, which ſuppoſe it alterable, and actually at that time altered: ſo it argues the ſame preſumption and folly to doubt of the poſſibility of a thing, and deny the great truths and principles of religion, whether

ther natural or revealed, meerly becauſe they are above our faculties, and are not proportionable to thoſe ideas and conceptions, which we derive from ſenſe and the impreſſions of outward objects. Which is

The third general head of this diſcourſe, which I undertook to make good: namely that

III. It is altogether unreaſonable to deny the verity of the divine attributes, and limit the power of God in things poſſible, or refuſe to ſubmit to the belief and acknowledgment of the myſteries of faith, becauſe they tranſcend either our power, or our underſtanding and comprehenſion. Which propoſition I ſhall conſider in its particular branches.

1. It is moſt unreaſonable to lay a reſtraint upon God almighty, and limit his power, and deny any thing to be poſſible, which is no way repugnant to the eſſential perfections of the Godhead, and does not involve in itſelf a real and manifeſt contradiction, upon this pretenſe, becauſe it tranſcends our power, or the whole power of created nature.

In this indeed, as I have intimated above, we have the advantage of all other creatures here below, that they act either neceſſarily, or elſe ſpontaneouſly onely *, that is, according to natural inſtincts, and are hurried on to their ſeveral objects by the force and ſway of their appetites, and conſequently do nothing by deliberation and choice. Thus the birds build their neſts ſpherically, and the bees are very artificial and curious in making the hony-comb, and the ſilk-worm and the ſpider ſpin a very fine and ſubtil thread: they perform the task, which the wiſdom of the great Creator has ſet them, and are directed to thoſe ends by his omniſcience, and to thoſe onely: for they cannot vary theſe actions, peculiar to each, according to their different powers. It is man onely in this viſible world, tho' ſent into it weak, and helpleſs, and unarmed, who

* Arnob. adv. gentes, lib. 2. Lugd. Batav. 4°. p. 55, 56.

who, when grown up to maturity of years and judgment, by the help of his wit and reaſon, can conquer the other creatures, and make them ſerviceable to his uſes, and eaſily maſter them, notwithſtanding their wildneſs and fierceneſs, and hereby exerciſe an entire dominion over them, as being conſtituted Lord of the creation: who can firſt deſign and contrive, and then perform and execute, what lyes within his reach and within his view. It is by this, that he has invented that great number of inſtruments and engines, whereby he reaches heaven, and takes an accompt of the order and motion of the ſtars, and of their ſeveral periods and revolutions, tho' at that vaſt diſtance from them, and makes them ſerviceable to the meaſuring of his time, and directing him in his travels and voyages. It is by this, that he dares commit himſelf to that inconſtant element, and by the directive virtue of a contemptible ſtone, as it appears to be, tho' more valuable for this admirable uſe, than all the diamonds of India, can find his way in the great ocean, where there is no track, and encompaſs the world from one pole to the other, and keep pace as it were with the ſun in its eaſtern and weſtern courſe. It is by this, that he raiſes ſtately manſions and fortifications, for his pleaſure and defenſe, cuts through rocks, and joyns diſtant rivers and ſeas by artificial channels, and invents thoſe curious manufactures, together with that great variety of other artificial productions, which ſerve both for ornament and convenience. And all this is done by a dextrous and skilful application of actives to paſſives: by framing and ſhaping the materials, which are made to his hands: by putting different things together, by enquiring into their nature and uſe: by ſtudy, and experience, and obſervation: by often repeated and adventurous tryals: by caſting about in his thoughts, how to ſecure himſelf of ſucceſs: by proceeding ſlowly and by degrees, according to method and order:

der: and the ſucceſs has been glorious and admirable, and a new world of things has been added; and every where, except in ſandy deſerts and uncultivated plaines and forreſts, and in ſuch countries, where the wild people are not reduced to gentleneſs and civility of manners, are erected monuments of mans wit and power. But how great ſoever this may ſeem, yet it is very little, and pitiful, and inconſiderable in compariſon of what he does not know, and what he cannot do: thouſands of things there are above his power, which neither his wit nor his arm can reach: it is not in his power to create one atome of matter: he does but diſguiſe things all this while, and put them into new ſhapes. All that he can pretend to, is but to know nature; and that very imperfectly, and to imitate it, as well as he can, and draw rough copies of that perfect original. For how rude, and homely, and inartificial are the beſt pieces of the ableſt Artiſts, if compared with the curiouſneſs, with the neatneſs, with the beauty of natural compoſitions! Theſe are ſo curious and admirable, wrought with ſuch excellent and extraordinary skill, that the moſt ſagacious and inquiſitive cannot fully comprehend them. All things are ſo exactly and geometrically fitted to their proper uſes, even the leaſt fibre, and the minuteſt particle, tho' imperceptible to the naked eye: there being nothing idle and uſeleſs in nature. There is ſo much accuracy and perfection in the meaneſt and moſt contemptible pieces of the creation, that the more a wiſe man, a Philoſopher, conſiders, the more he is at a loſs: and the reſult of his ſerious thoughts, after they have been long buſied and tired out in the ſearch, is this, that they are all the works of a divine hand, guided by an infinite wiſdome. Thus every conſidering man, even by a ſlight, much more ſerious and deliberate, contemplation of nature, cannot but be fully ſatisfied and convinced, that there is an all-powerful being, which has wrought all

theſe glorious effects: or elſe ſuch a one, if yet ſuch a ſilly creature, which has the ſhape, and pretends to the reaſon of a man, can be found, muſt fall into this prodigious and irrational error, which no one can be guilty of without the juſt imputation of phrenſie, that all that he ſees, is not the production of contrivance and deſign, but meerly of accidental hits, ſtrugglings, and conjunctions of little particles of matter, floating up and down in an infinite empty ſpace: that things fell into this admirable order and frame, which has diſtracted and confounded the wits of all ages fully to underſtand and make out ſatisfactorily, at firſt as it were of their own accord, as if they had had life, and ſenſe, and power to determine their own motions, and mutually agreed to do this, having firſt made themſelves: or which is as groſs and fooliſh a phantaſie, (though herein the Ariſtotelean Atheiſt thinks himſelf a fine wit and a ſubtil arguer in compariſon of the Atheiſts of the Epicurean ſect) that they are improduced and eternal: that the ſun moves in the Ecliptic to the great advantage and benefit of the world, and not in the Æquator, or in any of the Parallel Circles, meerly becauſe it happened ſo after long ſhiftings and infinite irregularities of motion: and that it ſtill keeps the ſame courſe as it were out of choiſe, and ſympathy, and good nature. But now how difficult, how falſe, how ridiculous, to ſay nothing of the impiety of it, muſt ſuch a way of arguing and proceedure be, to judge of God by our narrow ſcantlings of wit and ſtrength, to meaſure his power by our weakneſs, and the good or ill ſucceſs of our endeavours and undertakings: when we are ignorant of the utmoſt ſtrength of nature; what may be done by the conjunction and combination of ſeveral beings; how and in what manner they may operate one upon another; and what effects they may produce: and eſpecially, if we reflect, that many things have been

pro-

pronounced impoſſible, and given over as ſuch, that is, in reſpect of us, and not in the nature of the things themſelves, and for the wit and art of man to effect, which have been diſcovered by the induſtry of after-times. Why then ſhould any man pronounce a thing impoſſible, which involves in it no repugnancy to actual exiſtence, and hereby pretend to overthrow the doctrine and faith of miracles, becauſe they are above the ſtrength of nature? when the power of God, as has been proved, is immenſe and infinite: and by the ſame argument he may as madly conclude, notwithſtanding his high-flown pretenſions of arguing according to the principles of ſtrict reaſon, ſeveral things in the world, nay the world it ſelf, not to be made, and maintain dull and ſtupid matter to have been eternal: which is a manifeſt groſs abſurdity: meerly upon this ſuppoſal, becauſe if they were made, they muſt be made by a power above natural and humane.

2. It is moſt unreaſonable to reject the articles of revealed religion and the myſteries of faith, becauſe we cannot fully comprehend them. Before theſe men, whether Deiſts, or Socinians, renounce the belief of ſuch articles and myſteries, let them try their reaſon in explaining the difficulties of nature: let them reſolve all thoſe Problemes, if they can, which have exerciſed the Philoſophers of all ages: and if upon trial they cannot ſatisfie themſelves or others in thoſe ordinary phænomena, where they have their ſenſes to aſſiſt them: if they cannot tell, how things are done, which are done daily: if many of the ordinary operations of nature be abſtruſe and unintelligible: if they cannot trace her in all her labyrinths and windings, and are quite tired, and forced at laſt to give over the purſuit: if plain matters of ſenſe cannot be fully accompted for: why ſhould they preſume upon the ſtrength of their little knowledge, and make their reaſon the meaſure and ſtandard of divine truth, allowing that

onely to be true and certain which ſuits with it? He is very unfit to judge of any piece of art, ſuppoſe a picture or a watch, who knows nothing of deſign or clock-work; and eſpecially at firſt view, without taking notice of the ſeveral ſtrokes and lines, and the proportion of the parts of the one, or the hidden ſprings and wheels of the other, which give it that orderly and regular motion. And if an Artiſt reject their judgment, as fooliſh and incompetent, becauſe grounded on no principles of knowledge and skill: ſhall we not much more reject theſe mens either bold determination or peremptory denial of things, which they neither underſtand, nor have throughly conſidered? ſuch, as pretend, that they cannot believe either a creation, becauſe they cannot tell how to admit of a vaſt empty ſpace, before the world was made, or how it ſhould be made, no matter præexiſting; or a reſurrection, becauſe they cannot ſee how the ſcattered atomes of duſt ſhall rally and reunite, and conſtitute the ſame man again: ſuch, as disbelieve the articles of the Chriſtian faith, becauſe they cannot form clear ideas, and full and comprehenſive notions of them: and upon the ſame pretenſe theſe very men, who will believe nothing, but what they can make out and demonſtrate by reaſon, will, if they follow their own principle, quickly commence down-right Atheiſts, and deny God to be infinite, omniſcient, and eternal: of which neceſſary and eſſential attributes of the divine nature we cannot have complete and adequate conceptions, our narrow faculties being no way capable of it. But if there be ſuch a vaſt difference between man and man, upon the accompt of education, induſtry, experience, learning, and the ſeveral ways of advancing and improving reaſon and the natural faculties of the mind: if the conceptions of things be clear, eaſie, and diſtinct in ſome, without wracking or ſtraining the phanſie, which are clouded

clouded, perplext, and confuſed in others, by reaſon of ſome natural or accidental hinderances and diſadvantages, through dulneſs and ſtupidity, or ſettled prejudice: if we are ignorant of the poſſibilities of nature, and cannot tell, how far and in what manner natural cauſes may act: what can be more unreaſonable and unjuſt, than for a man, whoſe knowledge is ſcanty, and power confined within a narrow circle, and who is ſo apt to miſtake in his judgment of things, to oppoſe his reaſon to God's infinite wiſdom, as if it were equally clear and comprehenſive; to pretend, that his conceptions are the adequate meaſures of truth; and that God can do no more, than what he, poor finite ſhallow creature, is able to think; and to reject clear and expreſs revelations of God concerning himſelf, upon the accompt of a phanſied incongruity and a ſeeming repugnancy to his reaſon? If the creatures, which are of a different order of being from us, cannot at all, much leſs fully, underſtand and comprehend what we do according to the dictates of reaſon and wiſdom, and the reſults of deliberate counſel and ſtudy: becauſe life, and ſenſe, and animal motion are not able to reach ſo far, without the aſſiſtence of an higher and nobler faculty: what an unpardonable piece of arrogance is it for a man to think his reaſon able to comprehend the things of God, when there is ſuch an infinite diſproportion between them; and call in queſtion the truth of the divine revelations; and meaſure all by this crooked and deceitful rule, whether it be agreeable to his phanſie or not? It is a moſt rational and infallible ground of faith, that God, who has revealed theſe myſteries, cannot utter a falſhood. It is more certain than demonſtration, if God has once ſaid it. There are ſome monſters in the world, whoſe luſts and debaucheries have ſuggeſted to them doubts about the being of God, and the truth of his attributes: and a conſciouſneſs of their guilt has made

them

them wiſh, that there were none. No one was ever found, who acknowledged a God, and did not at the ſame time acknowledge, that he was juſt and true. Pythagoras found no oppoſition, when he taught, that there were two things, by which men became like to God; ἐν τῷ ἀληθεύειν καὶ ἐν τῷ εὐεργετεῖν, *by ſpeaking truth and doing good:* both perfections naturally ſtreaming from the divine nature. So that upon the whole matter it will appear, that it is nothing but pride and a preſumptuous conceit of maſtering all the difficulties of religion by the ſtrength of reaſon, which put them upon the denial of theſe revealed truths, and that this pride and preſümption are altogether unjuſt and unreaſonable. Which was the thing to be proved.

From this neceſſary, eſſential, and fundamental notion of the divine power, theſe following inferences, relating to practiſe, may moſt certainly be drawn:

1. That we are to repoſe our whole truſt and confidence in God, whoſe power is infinite.

We naturally fly in caſe of diſtreſs and danger to a power, which is able to protect and relieve us. There is no man, but needs a ſupport ſome time or other. Men are not always able of themſelves to reſiſt ſucceſsfully the aſſaults of envy and malice: but this way envy may be at laſt conquered, and enemies brought over and reconciled, or elſe defeated. Let this therefore be the great comfort of our minds, that God is both able and ready to aſſiſt us in our utmoſt and greateſt dangers, and in all the particular difficulties and diſtreſſes of our lives, which may befall us. It was a reflexion upon this, which made David break out into thoſe triumphant expreſſions: Pſalm xlvi. 1, 2, 3. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble: therefore will we not fear, tho' the earth be moved: and tho' the mountains be*

carried

carried into the midſt of the ſea: tho' the waters roar and be troubled: tho' the mountains ſhake with the ſwelling thereof. And v. 7. *The Lord of hoſts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

2. That we are to ſtand in fear and awe of God, and do nothing, which may diſpleaſe him.

Fear is a paſſion, which uſually reſults from a reflexion upon power: and according to the nature and degrees of it, the fear will riſe and encreaſe proportionably; and therefore the power of God, who is able to puniſh us eternally, is a moſt rational ground of fear. S. Luke xii. 4, 5. ſays our B. Saviour to his diſciples; *Be not afraid of them, who kill the body, and after that have no more, that they can do: but I will forewarn you, whom you ſhall fear; fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell: yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.* And with this argument the heroic woman encouraged her young ſon to endure the torments and cruelties of Antiochus, as his ſix brothers had done before him, rather than ſave his life by violation of the divine law: *I beſeech thee, my ſon, look upon the heaven, and upon the earth, and all that is therein: and conſider, that God has made them of things, that were not; and ſo was mankind made likewiſe. Fear not this tormentor, but being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren:* as you may read the tragical hiſtory in the ſecond book of Maccabees, chap. vii. Whoſoever reflects ſeriouſly * on God's infinite power, will never preſumptuouſly do ſuch things, as may draw on him his diſpleaſure: and upon a true ſenſe of his guilt, will be reſtleſs, till by repentance and a good life he is reinſtated in the love and favour of God.

* Vide S. Clementem, p. 37.

3. That

3. That the ſenſe of our weakneſs and defects ſhould teach us humility and modeſty in our enquiries into the great myſteries of religion: there being as great reaſon for us to ſubmit our underſtanding to the revealed truths of Scripture, as our will to its commands. He, who religiouſly adores and believes a God, and acknowledges him to be a being infinitely perfect, will not dare to queſtion the truth of his revelations: and as firmly will he believe, that all thoſe promiſes and threats, which are contained in the holy Scriptures, which have a reference to a future ſtate, ſhall one day be fulfilled. For with what pretenſe can any one doubt or disbelieve their fulfilling, who reflects upon God's truth and power? All doubt or diſtruſt ariſeth from a double cauſe, either becauſe men are not real in what they ſay, and ſo intend it not: or elſe want power to make their words good: neither of which can poſſibly have any place here. For God is a God of infinite veracity, and all his promiſes are infallibly real and firm: and he is able to perform them. We value not indeed thoſe menaces, which are the effects of an impotent paſſion; when we are out of their power, and when they cannot reach us: but there will be no flying from God: his eye and hand will find and lay hold on us, wherever we are. He, who made me at firſt, and placed the ſeveral parts of my body in that comely order, in which they ſtand, and which from time to time in *continuance* and in the ſucceſſion of a few months *were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them*, he can raiſe up this very body at the laſt day, and will raiſe it up: and of this I cannot pretend to have the leaſt rational doubt, were it ten thouſand times more difficult to conceive, than it is: becauſe he has abſolutely promiſed it, and his veracity is obliged for it, and his infinite power can eaſily make it good. Does God threaten impenitent and incorrigible ſinners with everlaſting tor-

ment

ment in hell; I with trembling ſubmit to the truth of this threatning: becauſe he can eaſily continue a creature in a miſerable being, unconſumed, and that for ever: and I know he will do it, becauſe he has ſaid it. And upon this belief and aſſurance we are to provide accordingly, that ſo we may avoid the ſtrokes, the fierceneſs, the terribleneſs of his revenging hand, and may partake of thoſe moſt glorious promiſes, which his goodneſs and mercy in Chriſt our Saviour has made over to us in this life, and which his infinite power will make good to us for ever in the next.

A DISCOURSE ABOUT THE CERTAINTY and EVIDENCE OF A Future State.

HOW much it is below a man to buſie himſelf wholly in the purſuit of earthly things, whether honour, wealth, or pleaſure; and how contemptible a creature he is, notwithſtanding all his acquiſts of outward greatneſs, unleſs he does raiſe his mind to the contemplation of better and nobler objects, whoſoever will reflect ſeriouſly upon the nature and faculties of the mind, by which he is enabled to diſcourſe, and reaſon, and judge of things and of their conſequences, unleſs he is utterly forſaken by his reaſon, and governed by brutal appetite, will be forced to acknowledge. Beſides, there are ſuch continual changes and viciſſitudes of things here below, ſo much uncertainty in them, and withal, ſo little ſatisfaction to the rational deſires of the ſoul, ſuch intermixtures of good and evil, ebbs and flows of pro-

ſperity, ſickneſs, and diſcontent, and diſappointments, and various anxieties, ariſing from irregular paſſion and diſtemper of bloud and humours, and a thouſand evil accidents, which no wiſdom or care can prevent, notwithſtanding the flattering intervals of health, and eaſe, and pleaſurable ſelf-enjoyment, taking up the greateſt part of our lives, and death at laſt, after three or fourſcore years at moſt, ſeizing upon us, that, even according to the judgment of natural reaſon, and the more refined Heathen have acknowledged it, the condition of humane life would be very miſerable, and all things conſidered, inferior to that of other creatures, if there were no life hereafter in another world. Nay, amidſt thoſe corrupt principles, which barbarouſneſs and ſenſuality had ſuper-induced among the wilder ſort of Heathen, immerſed in blind and ſtupid ignorance, and deſtitute of all helps and methods of knowledge and learning, they yet retained a belief and exſpectation of another ſtate after this life: this could not be wholly effaced out of their minds and memories: theſe thoughts purſued them, wherever they went: and when they met with violence and hardſhip, and were oppreſſed by the irreſiſtible ſtrength of invaders, and ſuffered unjuſtly, in all theſe ſtraits and difficulties, they comforted themſelves with faint hopes of it: and tho' they could not by reaſon of fatal prejudices and prepoſſeſſions, taken up from ſenſe, and of the want of the true knowledge of God, and his attributes, have any juſt apprehenſion or notion of the reſurrection of the body, yet they all concluded unanimouſly for the life, and being, and ſubſiſtence of the ſoul.

So that the wild and ſavage people of Afric and America, as well as the more civilized, and cultivated by philoſophy and the diſcipline of laws, give in full evidence againſt the Atheiſtical wits of the age, who with an unparallel'd boldneſs maintain, that when a man has acted his part in this life, he goes off the ſtage, and diſappears for ever,

ever, that the ſoul like a flame, when the matter, which fed it, is ſpent, is wholly extinguiſhed, and *vaniſhes into ſoft air*; *that we came into the world by meer chance, and ſhall be hereafter, as tho' we had never been:* as the Author of the book of Wiſdom elegantly brings in the Gallants of his time triumphing and entertaining themſelves with ſuch idle, phantaſtick, and irrational hopes; chap. ii. 2. and that when a man dyes, there is an utter end of him, a diſſolution of ſoul as well as body, every element taking its own, and the whole ſwallowed up in the univerſal maſs of matter, out of which it was at firſt made: ſinging out with the chorus in Seneca's Troas:

Quæris quo jaceas poſt obitum loco?
Quo non nata jacent.
and,
Poſt mortem nihil eſt, ipſaque mors nihil.

But it ought not to be exſpected, as to the Heathen, that they, whoſe eyes were dim and weak, and who were involved in thick clouds and miſts of ignorance, ſhould have a clear view and proſpect of another world, and that thoſe heavenly objects ſhould appear to them, whoſe underſtandings were darkned with falſe notions and principles, in their full brightneſs. However, it is moſt certain, that they did believe a life after this: and made it the great incentive and encouragement of virtue and courage in dying for their country: and when they did ill, and that in the dark, with all poſſible ſecrecy and undiſturbance, and with all ſecurity, under no reſtraint of law, or fear of puniſhment; yet their hearts miſgave them, and in private and alone they dreaded the evil effects and conſequences of their guilt. I am not backward to acknowledge, that this opinion, belief, and exſpectation of another life, might be oftentimes clogg'd in the

the best of them with mixtures of doubts: the prepossessions of sense stifling the dictates of right reason and the suggestions of natural conscience. Even that excellent person, Socrates, who was one of the first among the Greeks, who freed his reason from the entanglement of vulgar opinions in matters of religion and moral philosophy, which the corrupt Theology of their Poets had introduced, and who died as it were a Martyr for the unity of the Godhead, spake somewhat doubtfully of it in the discourse he had with his friends, the very day of his death: the sum of which is preserved by Plato in his dialogue, entitled *Phædo*, or *of the soul*. He said, *he would not be positive and dogmatical*: but however he profest his hope, that he should pass immediately to the company of those good men, who died before him, whose souls survived in some happy place he knew not where. This was far from the heroick and steady assurance of S. *Paul*, who after his second appearance before Nero, when he saw, that there was nothing but death to be exspected from the Tyrant and his bloudy Officers, triumphs in his neer approaches to it, as the entrance to a blessed immortality. 2 Tim. ii. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.* He seemed as sure of it, as if he had had the crown upon his head, and had been actually in heaven. What Philosophy can scarce reach, being at that vast distance from it, that Christianity easily discovers. Reason is the same in all mankind; but reason, assisted by revelation, is like the eye armed with a Telescope: it not only sees things clearer and better, but discovers new objects; such as before lay hid, and were indiscernible to the naked sight. A Christian man, that is, if he be more so, than in profession, and if his immoralities

Plato in Phœdone. edit. Cantabr. 8°. 1673.

Τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἂν πάνυ διϊσχυρίσαι μην. pag. 82.

lities have not altogether corrupted his mind, and plunged him into the very dregs of infidelity, cannot at all doubt of a future ſtate. He looks upon himſelf as a pilgrime, and is travelling toward a better country, that is, a heavenly: *here he has no continuing city, but looks for one to come.* His hopes are fixed elſewhere: and the doctrine of faith aſſures him of the certainty and reality of his hopes, and plentifully affords him good and well ſettled and unmoveable grounds, upon which his expectation is founded.

But ſetting aſide the proofs from the clear, and full, and uncontrollable revelations of Scripture concerning the different ſtates and conditions of happineſs and miſery in the other world: as having now to do with men, who throw off all belief of the ſacred writings of the Prophets and Apoſtles, and reject their authority; in order to their conviction I will only make uſe of arguments drawn from the principles of reaſon and of natural religion, which they pretend to admit and embrace, in proving, that there are things to be hoped for and feared in another world; that is, that there are rewards and puniſhments to be diſtributed hereafter according to our good or ill behaviour in this life: and that a full, and poſitive, and ſatisfactory proof of this is derivable from the nature of things, and that ſuch evidence is ſufficient, and cannot with any ſhew or pretenſe of reaſon be rejected.

I ſhall only by way of preliminary lay down this following propoſition, of the truth of which theſe men cannot but be fully ſenſible; *viz.* that the belief of this natural truth, ſo univerſally received, that is, in all ages and among all nations, is very conducive to, and has a mighty influence upon, the well-being of the world.

It is indeed one of the grand baſes and principles of all religion, whether natural, or preſcribed by poſitive inſtitution. If all things were to end here, and no exſpectation

tion of any thing future, men would little care to be virtuous or religious for virtues or religions ſake. For tho' to live virtuouſly and religiouſly, that is, according to the law of nature and the law of God, be agreeable to our rational faculties, and creates a greater joy and ſerenity in the mind, than what all earthly, ſenſual, and brutal pleaſures, enjoyed to their full height, can afford, and conſequently does carry along with it its own reward: yet it is juſtly to be feared, that the ſatisfaction of having done ones duty would be judged meager and empty in reſpect of thoſe groſs delights of the ſenſes, and be lookt upon as the effect of melancholy and chagrin, and it may be, of miſtake and folly; and that religion would have but few votaries upon this noble and generous principle. The only buſineſs then of life would be how to be rich and great: ſtrength would be the law of juſtice, and right and title meaſured out by the longeſt ſword. Innocence would be no ſecurity againſt oppreſſion and violence; but rather their ſport and prey. Luxury would go hand in hand with ambition: pleaſures, tho' never ſo unmanly and impure, ſhould be wanting to no ſenſe: the appetite ſhould be ſated with wine and luſt, and then raiſed again with charming incentives and provocatives. Men would play the beaſts more ſolemnly, make the whole creation adminiſter to their wantonneſs and riot, and ſpend their whole time in the exceſſes of extravagant mirth and jollity. Conſcience, alas, and honeſty would be accompted meer empty names: corrupt intereſt and policy would raiſe themſelves upon the ruines of religion and morality. Deceit and evil arts ſhould ſoon take place, where there was no hope of prevailing by open force. A mans own will, were it never ſo unreaſonable, ſhould be the onely rule of his life: and the gratification of an irregular appetite ſhould be the onely law of his mind.

Next, the belief of this fundamental truth is the great and neceſſary ſupport of government. It is like the middle ſtone of an arch, which ſuſtains the whole building: it keeps the world from falling into confuſion, and relapſing into its original chaos. All government would quickly be at an end: laws would not have ſufficient ſtrength to hold men in to their duty; at leaſt, they would be like ſpiders webbs, onely proper to entangle petty offenders, who could not break through them. They would no longer obey, than they were forced: they would be impatient of living under ſuch reſtraints, which, as ſome of our modern Virtuoſi pretend, abridge them of their natural liberty: and if ſo, they were to be treated like wild beaſts, and pent up in dens and caves from doing miſchief. Every man would pretend to have a right to every thing: and Mr. Hobbs's abſurd and phantaſtic hypotheſis about the ſtate of nature would be really introduced into the world by innumerable inſtances and examples of cruelty and injuſtice, to the ſhame of humane nature, and utter overthrow of humane race. Such continued claſhings and fightings would be more fatal and pernicious, than plagues, hurricanes, earthquakes, and inundations, and would quickly diſpeople the earth of all its inhabitants. It is the belief of another world, which ſecures government, preſerves authority, and gives ſtrength to laws.

Fear and hope have a great influence upon our lives: they are very imperious paſſions, and ſhew their power ſufficiently in all the great tranſactions of mankind, which are done with reaſon and deſign. They are natural to us, and will never forſake us: and their ſtrength increaſeth proportionably, according to the nature, and quality, and degrees of thoſe rewards and puniſhments, on which they are fixt. Now if theſe rewards and puniſhments

were only temporary, if after death there were nothing further to be feared or hoped for, men would not value the utmoſt ſeverity of law, to gratifie a paſſion, ſuppoſe luſt or revenge: they would willingly run the hazard of dying, ſo as that they might either enjoy their extravagant phanſies, or ruine and diſpatch their enemy: death in it ſelf being not ſo terrible, (the fear of which ſeveral paſſions can eaſily overcome) but as it is a paſſage to eternity. He, who is grown ſo deſperate, as not to value his own life, is eaſily maſter of another mans: and nothing could deter ſuch an one from acting the greateſt villany imaginable.

But now, if there be rewards and puniſhments after this life ended, if theſe rewards and puniſhments be everlaſting, if theſe everlaſting rewards and puniſhments be diſpenſed and proportioned according to the actions and behaviours of men here in this world, if this be certain, and if it be believed and exſpected as certain, the juſt and well grounded hope of future happineſs will powerfully perſwade and incite us to the practiſes of a virtuous and holy life; and the fear and dreadful exſpectation of future endleſs miſery will as powerfully deter us from the commiſſion of thoſe wickedneſſes, which render us juſtly obnoxious to ſuch puniſhments. For who would not be happy for ever, if he either might or could? who in his right wits and calm thoughts would be content to be miſerable to eternal ages? who would make it his choice to be damned, if he might avoid it?

Now as to the proof of a future ſtate from the principles of natural religion, the certainty and evidence of it are founded on the juſtice of God and his governing power: which render it undeniably neceſſary.

Nothing perplext the minds of the ancient Philoſophers more, than to ſee righteous and virtuous men oftentimes

times afflicted and oppreſt, and the wicked and diſſolute proſperous and triumphant. No phænomenon whatever, which they pretended might be ſolved and accompted for by their ſeveral hypotheſes, without intereſting a Deity at all in their ſolutions, troubled them ſo much, as this: theſe difficulties were great and perplext, and diſagreeable, as they thought, to the common notions of reaſon, equity, and juſtice, imprinted upon their minds: ſo that in the tumultuous workings of their thoughts, they began to queſtion, whether God (for ſuch a ſupreme being they could not, they durſt not deny) had any thing to do in the government of the world, who permitted ſuch diſorders, and ſeemed ſo unconcerned. But upon wiſe thoughts and ſedate deliberation they quickly recovered, and generally condemned the doctrine of Epicurus, and readily acknowledged, that all the great revolutions, that were in the world, all the odd and ſtrange events of things, and the different conditions of life, as to good and evil, ſo ſeemingly repugnant to the rules of right and wrong, were for wiſe ends and purpoſes permitted to come to paſs: that there was a ſoveraign infinite being, who governs the world according to his will and pleaſure; and that all things are ſubject to the rules and laws of his wiſdom and providence. This, after all their reſearches into the cauſes and reaſons of things, notwithſtanding the great difficulties, wherewith they had been entangled, was generally acknowledged by them, as the voice and dictate of univerſal nature and clear and right reaſon. The Schools of all the ſober Maſters and Profeſſors of Philoſophy, both at Athens and Rome, ſounded with this doctrine: and all, who pretended to virtue, and honour, and underſtanding, very few excepted, embraced it. It was to the belief of this prime truth, and the practiſes of religion grounded upon it, that the wiſe

and judicious * *Cicero* aſcribed the aſtoniſhing ſucceſs of the Roman Arms in the ſeveral diſtant parts of the then known world, where their victorious eagles percht; that it was not, becauſe they were more numerous, or excelled either in the arts of policy, or in the art of war, (as if the Galls or the Carthaginians had been inferiour to them in valour and diſcipline, for they had had frequent experience of the contrary, and had been ſadly diſtreſt by both; and Brennus and Hannibal were names, which had made Rome to tremble, or as if the other nations, as the Greeks, or the Spaniards, or even their own neighbours and countrymen, the Italians and Latines themſelves, whom they conquered, and brought under the juriſdiction of their imperial City, were not ſo numerous, or not ſo cunning and ingenious, and excellent in diſcipline and civil arts and accompliſhments of life) *ſed pietate atque religione, atque hac una ſapientia, quod Deorum immortalium numine omnia regi gubernarique perſpeximus: but in piety and religion, and in this peculiar wiſdom, that they acknowledged, that the great affairs of the world, and all things in it, were governed and over-ruled by a Deity.* This truth they retained, notwithſtanding the grievous errors, which they had taken up concerning the multiplicity of inferior Gods, and the horrible and ſhameful ſcandals of their idolatrous worſhip. But our improved reaſon, enlightned with the knowledge of the true God, does more fully and clearly, upon juſt and eaſie reflexions, prove and make manifeſt to us, that God, who created the univerſe, is an alwiſe God, holy, juſt, and true; that righteouſneſs is eſſential to his nature; that nothing comes to paſs, or can come

* Cicero in his Oration, de Haruſpicum reſponſis, which he pronounced in the Senate. *Quam volumus licet, P. C. ipſi nos amemus: tamen nec numero Hiſpanos, nec calliditate Pœnos, nec robore Gallos, nec artibus Græcos, nec denique hoc ipſo hujus gentis ac terræ domeſtico nativoque ſenſu, Italos ipſos ac Latinos: ſed pietate & religione, atque hac una ſapientia, quod Deorum immortalium numine omnia regi gubernarique perſpeximus, omnes gentes nationeſque ſuperavimus.*

come to pass without his appointment, at least without his permission; that what now seems disorder and chance, is wise contrivance and design; and that all the confusions brought upon the world, tend to illustrate God's wisdom and power, who can and will bring beauty and order out of them.

If all things then in the world are under a law, the law of their respective natures, and act according to the established laws of their creation; and if there be an over-ruling providence seen every where: man certainly, who is capable of a law, by reason of his intellectual faculties and liberty of will, cannot be supposed left to himself, to act, as he wantonly pleaseth, without being accomptable to a superior power. He, who made him, and continues his being to him, has a right to govern him, that is, may, if he will, lay down laws and rules for the right ordering of his life: and he has actually done so: and every man is conscious to himself, that he is obliged by virtue of his creation and dependence upon God to obey that law. Now it is not so much the equity, the agreeableness, the advantage, or necessity of a law, as the sanction, which makes it to be obeyed, and preserves it inviolable. If God then be the governour of the world, and particularly of mankind, and if he governs man according to the laws and rules of justice, the necessary and fundamental maxims of government will oblige us to believe, that he will accordingly reward and punish. *There is one Law-giver, who is able to save, and to destroy.* But we see daily, how the laws of God are violated, and that the violators of them oftentimes escape unpunished in this life: and we know, what ill use impatient and inconsiderate men have made of this forbearance and long-suffering of God. Is not bloud-thirsty cruelty, for instance, a manifest breach of the law natural.

ral and divine? that multitudes of innocent perſons ſhould be ſacrificed to the revengeful and wanton humour of a Tyrant; which was the caſe of the primitive Chriſtians during the reigns of the heathen Roman Emperours: who does not deteſt as impious and inhumane? yet how many of them, who have been guilty of this barbarity, have left the world without any mark of the divine vengeance upon them? they having had whole armies to defend them, and aſſiſt them in their outragious and bloudy maſſacres. Who is not concerned for the ſufferings of good men in all ages? when they are dead, they are pitied perchance, and men weep over their graves, and celebrate their memories with anniverſary orations, and ſpeak great things in praiſe of their courage and virtue, which no oppoſition, no trouble whatever, no not death it ſelf, could tire out and overcome. This is all the reward, which they have in this world: and certainly in it ſelf a very poor one, tho' juſtly due to their name and memory. But while they lived, oftentimes they were *deſtitute*, *afflicted*, *tormented*, wanting the conveniencies of life, expoſed to extreme poverty, and *to cruel mockings and ſcourgings*, *wandring about in deſerts and mountains*, and retiring to dens and caves for ſhelter; and outlawed by ſanguinary edicts from the ſociety of mankind: and at other times condemned to the flames, or to wild beaſts in their Amphitheatres, or to gibbets and croſſes, or to wracks and wheels, and ſuch like cruel deaths, with all poſſible ignominy, as well as torment. Does not the juſtice of God make it neceſſary, that there be a diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments hereafter, according as every one deſerves? Can the government of a moſt holy and alwiſe God be ſuppoſed imperfect and defective in ſo neceſſary a part of it, as is diſtributive juſtice? Can God be thought to give laws on purpoſe,

that

that they might be broken, and to reward the breakers of them, and to have no regard to thoſe, who conſcientiouſly obey them? This moſt certainly evinceth, that there muſt be another life after this, wherein God will vindicate the honour of his juſtice and providence, which now ſeemingly ſuffer, and do himſelf right in the ſight of all mankind. If there be a God, there will be a future ſtate, becauſe God cannot be otherwiſe than juſt. For tho' he hath an abſolute power over his creatures, yet he governs them according to rules of eternal rectitude and juſtice, and has declared from heaven his wrath and indignation againſt all unrighteouſneſs of men, which is the tranſgreſſion of thoſe rules, and his veracity, as well as his juſtice, will oblige him to make it good.

If it be ſaid, that this evidence of reaſon is not ſo clear and convincing, as that, which ariſeth from Mathematical demonſtration, or the atteſtation of ſenſe, tho' it ſhould be granted, nothing can be gained by it to the prejudice of the truth and certainty of this doctrine: which I ſhall ſhew in theſe two particulars:

I. That this evidence of reaſon is fully ſatisfactory of it ſelf.
II. That in a matter of this nature no other evidence can or ought to be exſpected.

I. That this evidence of reaſon is fully ſatisfactory of it ſelf, will appear hence, becauſe it is highly irrational to doubt or deny ſuch proofs, as are grounded upon the evidence of reaſon, meerly upon this pretenſe, that the evidence of Mathematical demonſtration and of ſenſe is clearer. For tho' all the maximes and poſtulata of Geometry, with the ſeveral Theoremes and Problemes built upon them, be in themſelves ſo clear and evident, as that

upon

upon a right perception either of the terms, or of the manner of conſtruction, we readily and eaſily yield our aſſent to them without the leaſt demur: and tho' the judgment of ſenſe be certain, that is, when nothing, requiſite to make the ſenſation perfect, is wanting: yet the Sceptick has called in queſtion the truth of both, upon this fooliſh pretenſe, that for ought he knows, and can be throughly convinced of, all this Mathematical evidence may be a fatal and ſettled deluſion: that it is poſſible, that a man may be moſt deceived, when he thinks himſelf moſt aſſured: that the collections and inferences of what we call reaſon may be falſe and deceitful: that the impreſſions, which material objects make upon the phanſie, may be onely chimerical: that when we ſee and hear, and diſcourſe, we may but onely think ſo: that we have as little certainty of things, when we are awake, and are very attentive and ſerious, as when we are aſleep and dream: and that our whole life may be but one continued ſcene of phanſie and imagination. So that the moſt common, and univerſal, and eſtabliſht truths of nature may be, and have been called in queſtion by ſubtil Sophiſters, who have a mind to cavil. But who does not deride and condemn ſuch ſcepticiſm as very ſilly and irrational? Men are not to be perſwaded or diſputed out of their ſenſes, and their belief of firſt notions, by ſuch idle and phantaſtick ſuppoſitions: the poſſibility of the truth of which is overthrown ſeveral ways, as, by the reflexions, which the underſtanding makes upon it ſelf, whereby we clearly know what we know: by our acting according to deliberation and fixt principles: by our being conſcious to our ſelves of the continued and repeated actions of our lives: by confirmed and undoubted experience, that, tho' we are deceived, when our outward ſenſes are ſuſpended by ſleep,

and

and the phanſie takes a liberty to amuſe us with a thouſand various ſhapes and figures, and ſometimes with ſtrange conjunctions of things, which neither exiſt, nor can poſſibly exiſt, we make certain concluſions from our awakened ſenſes, when we have the full and entire uſe and exerciſe of them: and becauſe it is inconceivable, either how ſuch a deluſion ſhould ariſe of it ſelf, and be eſſential to the nature of man; or how that God ſhould ſuffer it; that is, that he, who is of infinite truth, and wiſdom, and juſtice, ſhould force us by the very conſtitution of our nature to believe a lye, and embrace error under the ſemblance of truth: and that too without any help or means of diſcovering our being convinced of our miſtake, or at leaſt ſhould leave us to ſuch great incertainties, that we ſhould have no κριτήριον or rule to diſtinguiſh between, and diſcern truth from falſehood, and that he ſhould give us reaſon and ſenſe for no other end or uſe, but to deceive us, at leaſt to perplex and diſtract us with doubts and ſcruples, whether we underſtand and ſee, when we both underſtand and ſee.

The certainty and clearneſs of Mathematical demonſtration (as alſo of ſuch propoſitions, as are ſaid to be *æternæ veritatis*) ariſeth hence, becauſe it is converſant about things abſtracted from matter, or, rather to ſpeak more clearly and diſtinctly, it is founded in the eſſential notions and properties of things, which have an inſeparable dependence upon and connexion one with another, without any regard to their actual exiſtence; as that all the lines drawn from the center of a circle to the circumference are equal; and that the whole is greater than any of its parts: which is infallibly and univerſally certain; it being eſſential to the nature of a thing, conſidered as entire and whole, to be made up of many parts united and connected together, and therefore neceſſarily

greater than any one of thoſe parts actually divided or conceived divided from it. And the like is to be ſaid of all the eſſential attributes and properties of a ſphere, cylinder, ellipſis, or any other Geometrical figure whatever: tho' there were no exactly ſpherical, cylindrical, or elliptical body in nature, or could be framed ſuch by the power of art. Such ſpeculative truths carry in themſelves their own evidence: and the underſtanding very readily aſſents to them: and let me add, the more readily, not only, becauſe it would be the effect either of a natural or ſhamefully abſurd ſtupidity to deny ſuch evidence, which would be the ſame thing, as to maintain groſs and palpable contradictions; but alſo becauſe it is no mans intereſt to do ſo. For nothing is more certain, than that intereſt oftentimes rejects the clear reſults of reaſon; than that the judgment is oftentimes enclined to paſs a wrong ſentence, even againſt knowledge and juſt proof of the contrary, in favour of a falſe opinion, if it be advantagious; that what we do not like, and is diſagreeable to our deſigns, does not eaſily get admittance within us: we demur upon it, and raiſe difficulties and doubts, and pretend, that we cannot underſtand it; when the true reaſon is, it makes againſt us, and therefore we will not. And this is one great reaſon, why the Atheiſts and Deiſts ſet themſelves againſt the fundamental truths of religion, and labour ſo much to confirm themſelves in their infidelity, by making uſe of their wit and the little reaſon, that is left them, to find out new difficulties, and raiſe objections, to juſtifie and defend themſelves in their unbelief, in oppoſition to the rational, wiſe, and juſt ſentiments of good men, whom they moſt abſurdly repreſent under the nickname of *Believers*, that is, credulous. For theſe men are fully convinced, that their practiſes are altogether inconſiſtent with ſuch profeſſions: that if they admit theſe truths,

truths, they muſt quit their preſent courſe of life, unleſs they could have the patience to live under the anguiſh of ſelf-condemnation, which would turn all their luſcious enjoyments into gall and wormwood: that if there be a God, and that his power and juſtice are equally infinite, he is to be feared and adored: (for who would dare to live in open defiance of his laws, and blaſpheme him daily, who believes, that he can puniſh him eternally for ſuch defiance and blaſphemy?) and that if there be a future ſtate, they muſt not then live like the beaſts, which periſh, and which are altogether unconcerned in it. But the pleaſures of the animal life have corrupted their minds: they are immerſed in ſenſuality: they have given up themſelves to be governed by their appetite: to gratifie that is their only ſtudy and buſineſs: it is death to them to think of a ſober, reſtrained, and mortified kind of life: it is not their intereſt, they know, as the caſe ſtands with them, to believe, that there is a heaven or an hell: and therefore we need not wonder, if they cry out, that they ſee no force in this or that argument, in which the whole world has hitherto acquieſced, as juſt and ſatisfactory, to convince their judgment. Nothing will content them, but Mathematical evidence and demonſtration: tho' it may very juſtly be feared, that if the evidence, they ſo fooliſhly call for, were prejudicial to the end and purpoſes of life, which they purſue, they would deny even that too.

II. No other kind of evidence in the caſe of a future ſtate can or ought to be exſpected or demanded. And the reaſon is, becauſe the ſubject-matter is not capable of it. There are different ways of proving things agreeable to their reſpective natures, both in Metaphyſics, Natural Philoſophy, Ethics, and the like; of the concluſions of

which, fairly deduced according to the laws of method, there can be no juſt doubt: every ſcience being built upon certain general principles and rules, taken up, either from experience and obſervation, or elſe drawn from the common notices and conſent of mankind. Often repeated trials and experiments, which have ſucceeded well, ſufficiently convince us of the truth of ſeveral things, which we will not pretend to demonſtrate. If a matter of fact, in it ſelf not unlikely, much leſs impoſſible, be confirmed by credible witneſſes, or by authentic records, it would be a very ſtrange piece of niceneſs in us, to deny the truth of it, and call for demonſtration: becauſe we have all the aſſurance, which relation and hiſtory can give us, that it is ſo. To perſwade a man, that it is his duty to be juſt, and honeſt, and ſober, and chaſt, I am onely to make uſe of moral arguments. To prove to him, that he has a command over himſelf, as to his actions, I ſhew him the abſurdities of the doctrine of fatal neceſſity: and if he ſhould perſiſt and demand further ſatisfaction, I can do no more, than make an appeal to himſelf, whether he does not find a power within him of acting or not acting, as he pleaſeth: whether he does not deliberate with himſelf, whether he had beſt do it or no: and when after ſome demurs and debates he hath determined his will, of his own accord, which before was indifferent either to this or that, whether he doth not conſult about the means to bring about his deſign: and upon a ſurvey of ſeveral, make choice of ſuch, as he judgeth moſt proper and effectual. In theſe and the like caſes, we can have no Mathematical evidence and demonſtration: yet we cannot rationally doubt of the verity of their proofs: tho' the evidence and aſſurance be onely moral, yet it is ſuch, as will perſwade any man, who is free from unjuſt and irrational prejudice.

Beſides,

Beſides, upon this kind of aſſurance (a) depends all the actions of our lives. No man can demonſtrate to another, who has not been there, that there are ſuch countries, as India, Perſia, and Turkey, or ſuch great cities, as Dehli, Agra, Iſpahân, and Conſtantinople; and yet men ſend their eſtates thither, tho' they have onely the reports of others for their aſſurance, and the ability and integrity of the perſons, whom they employ and truſt in the management of their rich trade. That they are the ſons of ſuch and ſuch perſons, they are onely aſſured by the teſtimony of others, and chiefly of their Parents, who have taken care of their education. It would be idle, monſtrous, and unnatural to deny to pay them the reſpect and reverence, due to them, both by the laws of God and nature, upon a pretenſe, that they have ſome ſcruples upon their minds, whether they be their parents or no: and that it cannot be made out demonſtratively to them, that they are ſo. What other aſſurance have they, that the deeds and conveyances, whereby they hold their eſtates, derived down to them from their anceſtors, at the ſealing and delivering of which they were not preſent, are not counterfeit; and would they be contented to have them called in queſtion upon ſuch a phantaſtick ſuppoſition? No one can demonſtrate to himſelf out of Euclide and Archimedes, that the houſe, wherein he lyes, will not fall upon his head: and yet for all this bare poſſibility he ſleeps ſecurely and without any diſturbance, and will not lye in the open air. Not to heap up more inſtances in a thing ſo common, and every where to be met with.

(a) *Eſtne opus in vitâ negotioſum aliquod atque actuoſum genus, quod non fide præeunte ſuſcipiant, ſumant, atque aggrediantur actores?* As Arnobius adv. Gentes lib. 2. pag. 47. Lugd. Bat. 4°. 1651. there ſhews at large with great ſharpneſs of wit and judgment againſt the Heathen of his time. who objected credulity to the Chriſtians.

All

All ſatisfaction concerning the certainty of a future ſtate is offered, that can be juſtly demanded. We have the evidence of reaſon, and the evidence of religion, which is founded upon the belief of it: the juſtice of God makes it neceſſary: and the doctrine of providence and of the government of the world by the alwiſe and omnipotent Creator ſuppoſe it. Things future are not triable by (b) ſenſe: they are the objects of our hopes, and of our fears, and of our belief, and of our exſpectation; and therefore cannot be proved to exiſt the ſame way, as things, which every day preſent themſelves to our ſight. But how are theſe men aſſured, that there is no future ſtate? what demonſtration can theſe great Maſters of reaſon, as they think themſelves, whom nothing leſs will content and ſatisfie, bring to the contrary? It is but juſt and reaſonable, that they who deny, or ſo much as call in queſtion, the truth of any opinion, tho' built upon probable arguments, ſhould produce arguments, if not of greater, yet at leaſt of equal probability. To deny a thing boldly at firſt, without giving any reaſon for the denial, and then to be very peremptory in the affirmation of a contrary propoſition, is againſt all the laws and rules of wiſe diſcourſing and arguing, and is not the effect of judgment, but of meer trifling and fooliſh conceitedneſs: much more when they pluck up the very foundations of a ſcience; when they deſtroy the principles of nature; when they condemn a truth, as is this of a future ſtate, which all mankind in all ages has received and embraced, except an inconſiderable number of wretches like themſelves, they ſhould be throughly convinced before hand, that their proofs are juſt and good, and little leſs than infallible. But all which they alledge in behalf of their infidelity,

(b) *Nulla futurorum poteſt exiſtere comprobatio. Cum ergo hæc ſit conditio futurorum, ut teneri & comprehendi nullius poſſint anticipationis attactu &c.* Arnob. lib. 2. pag. 44.

delity, is either, that they cannot frame a juſt and clear idea of ſuch a ſtate: or elſe they make ſome little and unphiloſophical exceptions and cavils at terms, as *Spirit*, *incorporeal ſubſtance*, and the like: which is the way of Mr. Hobbes; (tho' the notion of an incorporeal ſubſtance and of thought is as eaſie to conceive, and as little liable to juſt exceptions, as of ſubſtance in general, or of ſubſtance in extended matter) pleaſing themſelves onely with the groſs images of ſenſible beings. They cannot pretend to any direct and poſitive proofs: they neither can nor dare ſay, that what they imagine is certain and infallible. They only think ſo, and wiſh ſo: and indeed for their wiſhes they have ſome reaſon, tho' none for their opinion. For what malefactor can think of his trial and the conſequences of it with any kind of patience, and not wiſh at the ſame time, that there were no ſuch things, as a law and a judge to execute that law in their deſerved puniſhment? And beſides this, they very fooliſhly and idly alledge, that they have not ſpoken with any, who have ariſen from the dead to give them an accompt of it: as if before they would be convinced, whether there be ſuch places, as a heaven or an hell, they would have an exact ſurvey taken of them; and ſeveral chorographical ſchemes and maps made to deſcribe them the better to them. But is not this a moſt irrational and ſenſeleſs ground of their infidelity? Have we not in the ſacred writings undoubted teſtimonies of ſeveral raiſed from the dead, beyond all poſſibility of denial, of which faithful and authentic regiſters have been made to inform poſterity? But may it not alſo be juſtly ſuppoſed, that theſe very men, if the moſt real and certain apparition poſſible were made to them, after they had recovered themſelves from the ſurprize and affrightment, into which ſuch a gaſtly ſight might caſt them,

would

would look upon it onely, as a meer phantome? as Caſſius, one of the ſect of Epicurus, told his friend Brutus, as Plutarch writes in his life, that the evil genius, which appeared to him, was the effect of his melancholy; no other than a dream and the roving of his diſturbed imagination, when he was between ſleeping and waking: or if a dead perſon, raiſed again to life, ſhould appear to them, they would cavil, and ſay, that he had not been really dead: they would find out ſome ſuch fooliſh and idle pretenſe and excuſe, and ſtill hold faſt their beloved concluſion. The rich man in the Parable, when he was in hell, was very ſollicitous for his ſurviving brethren, that they might not come into that place of torment: and therefore made it his requeſt, that a meſſenger might be ſent thence expreſs to forewarn them; but the propoſal was rejected, as unjuſt and unneceſſary. They were ſufficiently inſtructed out of the divine writings, that there was ſuch a place: the Law and the Prophets were continually read, and ſounded in their ears, that they could not pretend ignorance. Beſides, *if they hear not Moſes and the Prophets: neither will they be perſwaded, tho' one aroſe from the dead.*

But let us ſuppoſe, in order to the conviction of theſe men, if any of them ſhould chance to caſt their eyes upon theſe papers, that there were an equal probability on both ſides: that as much might be ſaid againſt the certainty of a future ſtate, as for it: that God had not ſo clearly and expreſly revealed his will in the holy Scriptures about it: and that the caſe had not been ſo fully determined, but yet hung as it were *in æquilibrio*: yet becauſe it is of an eternal conſequence (*c*), right rea-

(c) *Nonne purior ratio eſt ex duobus incertis & in ambiguâ exſpectatione pendentibus, id potius credere, quod aliquas ſpes ferat, quam omnino quod nullas?* Arnob. p. 44.

ſon

ſon and common prudence ſhould teach a man to make choice of the ſurer ſide: nay, if there were leſs degrees of probability for it, we ſhould make proviſion however, for fear, that it ſhould prove ſo. If in matters of ordinary ſpeculation, which ſignifie nothing to our intereſt and advantage, whether they be true or no, (for what am I the better, whether the Ptolemaic or Copernican hypotheſis beſt ſolves the various appearances of the heavens) we relinquiſh the vulgar opinions, which have the preſcription of antiquity, and which ſeem confirmed by ſenſe, as being ſwayed by more rational proofs and evidences: certainly in a buſineſs of ſuch moment, as is the living hereafter for ever in happineſs or miſery, when there are ſo many arguments to ſway and encline our belief; when we have all the aſſurance, which things, that are future, and not yet ſeen, can poſſibly have: when the danger is ſo great, and the loſs infinite and irrepairable, it is a folly beyond all expreſſion for any perſon to ſuffer himſelf to be cheated, by the corrupt judgment of ſenſe, which in this caſe cannot pretend to arbitrate, and by the little cavillings and oppoſitions of a groſs phanſie, into the belief of the contrary. If onely the probable hope of gain makes men deſpiſe certain danger, and carries them round about the world to the utmoſt points of Eaſt and Weſt: if they undergo, not onely with patience, but with great readineſs and chearfulneſs, all thoſe uneaſineſſes and hazards, which ſuch long voyages in tempeſtuous ſeas, and through various climates of exceſſive heat and cold, neceſſarily ſubject them to: if they venture their health, and oftentimes their lives: and that too with the good liking and applauſe of the world, eſpecially if the advantage be any way proportionable to the danger: certainly the intereſt of our immortal ſouls ſhould make us adventure

as much for heaven, a place of infinite bleſſedneſs, where we ſhall live for ever, without feeling the decays of age, and without being weary of thoſe unmixt pleaſures, which it affords; and where are heaped up treaſures of glory, which no time ſhall exhauſt, if we had not the infallible word of God for it, but onely the dictates of natural religion, and the evidence of right and unprejudiced reaſon.

Columbus had no demonſtration, that there were ſuch vaſt tracts of land on the other ſide of the great Atlantic ocean, running out almoſt from one Pole to the other, which he afterwards diſcovered: he was onley lead by probable arguments to undertake that voyage: as thinking it very unlikely, that ſo great a part of the terraqueous globe, over which the Sun paſſes in his diurnal revolution, ſhould be covered with water. It was lookt upon at firſt as a project, which had nothing to ſupport it, but the ſtrong phanſie of the man, who propoſed it: and it was a long time, before he could be furniſhed with ſhips, in order to make a diſcovery. But how were they alarmed at his return with the news, which he brought of another world, which had layn hid for ſo many ages! how were the opinions of the old Philoſophers confuted, that there could be no living between the Tropics, and eſpecially under the Line, by reaſon of the intolerable heat, which the perpendicular projection of the ſun-beams they phanſied muſt neceſſarily produce: when they were aſſured from eye-witneſſes, that no country in the world could be more populous! Now our B. Saviour, who came down from heaven, has made full and clear diſcoveries of a glorious kingdom, and has laid down rules and directions for our journeying thither: rules and directions ſo plain,

plain, that we cannot fail of arriving at that bleſſed place, if we obſerve and follow them. What can any one alledge to juſtifie or excuſe his folly? how can he anſwer it to God, or to himſelf, at the laſt great day, if after all this he ſhould doubt, whether there be ſuch a place, as heaven or no, and ſo doubt, as wretchedly to neglect the happy opportunities of getting thither at the end of his life?

If, as Socrates argued a little before his death, nothing remains to a man after he is dead, then he would be the leſs troubled at what he was then about to ſuffer: for then he ſhould ceaſe to be miſtaken, if he were miſtaken. But if there be another ſtate in the next life, as there is the higheſt reaſon to believe, and no reaſon to believe the contrary, what a fooliſh bargain will it appear, the Epicure has made in buying the vain and periſhing pleaſures of the world at the price of his ſoul! It will then be an infallible demonſtration, that he has acted againſt the common rules of prudence, in preferring a trifle, a ſhadow, a humour, before the favour of God; before the fulneſs of joy, which is to be had in his preſence; before immortal bleſſedneſs, with which he ſhall ſee the righteous crowned; which will heighten his anguiſh, and make it intolerable: and the thought of this will as much torment him, as the very flames, that he might have been happy as they, but for his own wretched careleſsneſs and obſtinate infidelity.

To conclude this ſhort diſcourſe, which I moſt heartily and paſſionately recommend to the ſerious and impartial conſideration of all ſuch, as vouchſafe to read it.

Seeing that there will be and muſt be a day of judgment, in which we ſhall give a ſtrict accompt of our lives: that there is a future ſtate, whoſe duration ſhall be beyond the limits

limits of time; that, when we depart out of this life, we launch forth into an ocean, which knows neither bounds nor shore: that there are eternal rewards and punishments in the other world: and that according to the tenor and habit of our lives, and the condition we are found in at our death, we shall receive our everlasting doom: how much does it concern every one of us so to live here in this world, that is, in the fear of God and in a conscientious discharge and practise of all Christian and moral virtues, as to live for ever happy in the next!

FINIS.